

March 14, 2016

Dear Sen. Joan Hartley, Rep. Chris Perone, and members of the Commerce Committee,

As an employee of the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum, a member of the Wethersfield Tourism Commission and a member of the executive board of the Central Regional Tourism District (CRTD) I SUPPORT **Bill H.B. No. 5576** to provide dedicated tourism marketing funding. As you know statistics continue to show that dollars spent on tourism are returned to the state through the taxes collected. This includes the occupancy tax. If these funds were dedicated to tourism those taxes would continue to flow into the state coffers.

Please keep in mind that not all members of the tourism community have the marketing resources that the casinos, CT Science Center, Mark Twain Museum or the New Britain Museum of American Art have at their disposal. As a small but important museum the Webb-Deane-Stevens is grateful to the support of the State Tourism department and the CRTD. The promotion they provide through their website and Facebook pages allow us to reach many more people than our small marketing budget would allow. In return people visit Wethersfield and support our shops, restaurants, B&BS and hotels spending money to support these small businesses. These businesses hire staff who in turn pay income tax to the state thus providing more money toward the budget.

The Central Regional Tourism District has also proved much needed support to the Wethersfield Tourism Commission as we plan and attempt to market group packages to bring more visitors to the town. I am preparing to travel to the Discover New England conference this year for the second time. I would have been completely lost on how this process works without the help of Ann Orsene and Deborah Gintonio.

Connecticut's occupancy tax is currently directed into the general fund. The legislature determines the amount to be allocated to tourism marketing. We are proposing that a percentage of the occupancy tax currently being collected, be directly allocated to tourism marketing with the balance then going to the general fund. This account would be performance based through annual occupancy tax collections.

Why dedicated tourism marketing funding works for Connecticut:

I ask you today to support dedicated tourism marketing funding so we can maximize the economic impact of travel and tourism in Connecticut. Tourism is an essential economic driver for the well-being and future of Connecticut.

Thank you for your time, effort and your support for a better Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Sullivan  
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